

Davenport returns to competitive tennis with win

Former No.1 Lindsay Davenport returned to competitive tennis, after a gap of more than a year, with a 6-2, 6-3 win over Laura Granville in the first round of the ASB Classic here Monday.

Victory in the 66-minute New Year's Eve all-American contest was a prelude to Davenport's return to the Australian Open for the first time since a January 2006 quarterfinal appearance.

The veteran stepped out of the game in late 2006 and gave birth in June 2007. But the tennis bug bit the new mum with Davenport testing the waters last autumn and taking titles in Bali and Quebec.

She's now banking on a full-time return to the WTA. 'I had a lot of fun,' Davenport said of Monday's victory. 'I was really enjoying myself playing out there.'

But she warned: 'There were things I want to do to improve. The first match of the season is always tough. I've been short of match play recently.'

Davenport, climbing back from the 61st position in the WTA ranking, now stands 4-0 over Granville, striking more than 30 winners in the rout.

In other opening-day results, third-seeded Slovenian Katarina Srebotnik advanced when Russian Anastasia Rodionova retired with an injury 6-0, 3-0.

Up-and-coming Austrian teenager Tamira Paszek advanced over Belgian Yanina Wickmayer 7-6 (9-7), 6-1 while American Ashley Harkleroad put out French eighth seed Emilie Loit 6-4, 6-1.

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